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ABSTRACT

Increasing the college enrollment and graduation of minority students will require systemic change in educational institutions. Currently, school systems are not equal in all communities and there exists a widespread lack of awareness of the importance of higher education and visible mobilizing forces in minority communities. Moreover, increasing entrance requirements and tuition costs are further limiting enrollment among minority groups. Community colleges and other institutions of higher education should use information gained from community outreach efforts to become more responsive to their communities, leading equity efforts, initiating partnerships for change, preparing educators with adequate skills, and providing technical assistance. The existing educational system presents many obstacles to increasing minority college graduation rates, including inadequate and misapplied assessment/placement methods, an acceptance in minority communities of the meager numbers of their children pursuing higher education, and reluctance to change existing policies and systems among school board members. However, dramatic steps must be taken to change the current climate. School boards should re-align policies to include local initiatives in curricula, while accountability might be refocused to center on grades, test scores, college preparation and enrollment, equitable distribution of students within academic programs, higher levels of parental involvement, and the general competitiveness of students in college and the world of work. (AJL)

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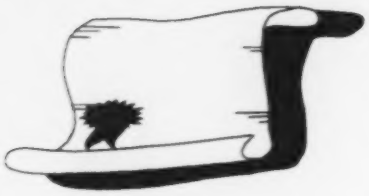

PRESENTATION TEXT
Position Paper

"Coalition to Improve Minority Degrees"
ASU Main Campus

"Arizona Minority Student Education Access and Achievement Into the 21st Century: Setting the next Agenda", Phoenix, Arizona

"Innovative Strategies to Increase Minority Higher Education Enrollment and Success"

Jose Mendoza
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Spring 1995/Fall 1996

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Underlying Assumptions Related to
Minorities Achieving College Degrees
January 1995/September 1996

The *worthwhile*, but very difficult task of assuring significant increases in college enrollment and graduation is not going to be easy. A study review of present systems of education, including higher education, indicates that *systemic change* beginning from the *policy level is needed*.

Therefore, for the purpose of this discussion the following *assumptions* can possibly be applicable.

-*Minorities* (adult and public school) do not fully realize the significance or importance of educational attainment and excellence.

Therefore, there exists a widespread lack of awareness and motivation for educational achievement.

-School systems and communities are not equal in educational programs. Therefore, minorities suffer from lack of any major/local visible mobilization for education.

-The *educational delivery systems, methodology, and curriculum*, is generally not being adequately successfully implemented in preparing *everyone for higher education*, with greater disparity for minorities visible.

-There is not enough acceptable levels of higher education attainment to make an impact in the community and the minority community and its prospective students.

-Higher education, with an added pressure in four-year colleges and universities are capping/controlling their enrollments and raising the entrance requirements, resulting in minorities *competing unsuccessfully* for the available entry slots.

-The continued tuition increase/costs do have detrimental effect on higher education enrollment, especially for the economically disadvantaged populations.

-Educational expectations in schools and community have not changed or can even be considered as declining. Therefore, the present and future student resource for college enrollment and success do not have the necessary foundation to assure higher education success. This aspect of the problem is considered much more severe for minority populations.

-Close working partnerships across educational boundaries are not necessarily widespread and making significant impact on educational achievement success. Therefore, overall effectiveness measures should encompass the entire educational spectrum. With the driving forces for college enrollment, graduation and success.

"INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS TO RETAIN MINORITY STUDENTS"

"EFFORTS NEEDED TO ASSURE MUCH MORE MINORITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND SUCCESS"

<u>Perceptions based on community college outreach experiences</u>:

The community college, with a minority emphasis program, has a unique and overall view of the systems of education within its service area boundaries. Outreach efforts will immediately identify problem areas and obstacles to higher education enrollment. In addition, college enrollment "*Assessment Instruments*" for English, reading and math will reveal need areas of a particular community and school system. Also, dialogue and interaction with the prospective students will reveal the awareness, sophistication, and level of motivation towards higher education. There can be a transcript analysis of the enrolled students to assess college preparatory coursework trends will also reveal if the curriculum emphasis or school direction is geared to assure that many of their products (the students), are in the "*academic mainstream*" and planning on college immediately after high school. Also, comprehensive educational development services to clientele from various communities can also serve as a "barometer" as to the preparation of the students and communities in general.

Therefore, the community college, the four-year colleges and universities, do not have to function without a lack of knowledge of the needs of their overall communities and their minority community. The higher education delivery systems by these institutions can take into account the diversity of their community and plan on assurances that their student populations will also mirror their diverse community.

Again, it should not be "*hands off*" public education but a concern to work collaboratively with that community to help alleviate the problems and the obstacles to higher education enrollment which everyone agrees should be much greater.

The initial part of the presentation will center on understanding the dynamics of the minority community, its unique characteristics, its special needs, and attempt to focus attention on those areas that can be modified and adjusted systematically in order to comply with the "objectives" of this conference, which is to bring to light the dire need to educate the minority community, and suggest *"action plans"* which will make major inroads into minority education. The closing aspects of the presentation will point out suggested areas of interest and action for higher education policy makers and leaders to make the desired impact in their institutions.....

The Role of Higher Education in Relation to Goal to Increase Minority Degrees

-Be a leader/change agent in a massive mobilization effort for equity in public education *inclusive* of all the community-in the sense that some changes do need to occur and everyone needs to be involved the changes should have a dramatic and positive effect on the community.....

-Restructure higher education to adjust and accommodate to all the community.....

-Higher education can initiate partnerships, develop collaborations, and facilitators for positive and constructive changes.

-Prepare educators that can help meet the challenges-much more educational success will mean that educators will have to have the skills and knowledge to assure the educational development in a pre-college curriculum of a much broader proportion of the school community. The educators must have the ability to inspire and motivate everyone for educational excellence initiatives.....

-Provide technical assistance and expertise directed at meeting the challenges and helping at resolving the problems.....There are problems within the community that can be resolved with the resources of higher education provided that partnership efforts are initiated with goals to have an impact on a broad scale.....

-Setting of appropriate priorities and restructuring of resources.....is necessary as the resource for students is now much more different and the clientele can have just as much or even more educational success provided the institution has prepared for such clientele which will probably be much more *first-generation* college students and have unique needs.....

-Financial assistance and targeted efforts for the new student clientele who is much more economically and educationally disadvantaged.....The new clientele cannot have access to higher education if the financial resources are not present and adequate in order to *achieve degrees within acceptable timeframes* (a point of contention and debate by Regents policy-makers.....)

-Have revolutionary goals that have priorities, resources and In other words, the policy-makers should not be afraid to set idealistic goals or exhibit a dramatic sense of *mission*....

Summary Statement

A cross-cultural country/society as will be realized, necessitates that everyone is an active participant in the fruits of our society, with educational excellence viewed as the primary vehicle to help make this happen for everyone. That is the primary essence of the problems of our society at this time in that there is a clear definition between those that have opportunity and resources and those that don't.....It does not have to be this way.....We can make sure of that.....

"Coalition to Improve Minority Degrees" ASU Main Campus
"Arizona Minority Student Education Access and Achievement Into the 21st Century: Setting the next Agenda" (Phoenix)
Jose Mendoza, Program Coordinator
MULTI-CULTURAL AFFAIRS, *Glendale Community College*
Spring 1995/FALL 1996
PRESENTATION TEXT/Position Paper

Introductory Remarks and Background:

The goal of the Coalition, to bring the issue of *the need for many minority college graduates* prepared to be the resource for critical employment career areas is warranted and commendable. To bring the issues/concern to the forefront for discussion and action is sure to get the attention of many in higher education; and especially those individuals who see this issue as critical for the economic well-being of the community and the status for the country in the global community. The *"Coalition"* concern for minorities that are well prepared, working adults who have academic backgrounds, critical thinking skills, a broad-based general education, and overall employment competitiveness. *Therefore, the need to assure present and future college enrollment and graduation of minorities/under-represented students to meet those critical present and future employment needs.*

There are many obstacles and existing systems and structures that directly and indirectly affect the desired outcome for many more minority college graduates. In order to make the desired impact, it is important to understand the complexities of the problem. It is important to know the *policy issues, public perceptions and priorities,* as well as the systems and institutions and their methods for implementation.

There are general perceptions about the problem, but it is important to realize that there are *entrenched and possibly outmoded systems of thinking* that not only needs to be understood, but analyzed to determine an effective strategy for change and assure a systematic change that is far-reaching and replaces current thinking as we know it and oversteps the boundaries/parameters that currently exit.

This country is confronted with demographic realities that will generally affect the ways in how our country can meet the needs of its residents and still maintain a global economic status. Therefore, the demographic realities demand that attention be given to this issue, and that it become a *national priority*. However, a cursory overview of the community environment indicates that existing systems and educational institutions do not even have a lukewarm understanding of the issue, much less a ***"call for action"*** to assure attention, focus, and resources on the problem. Provided that the demographic changes are as forecast, there will exist a very culturally diverse nation, with over two-thirds of the country's future population classified as ethnic-minority. Therefore, this country should recognize this and should take the necessary action now to put into place strategic plans that will alleviate the educational and economic disparity which this country's policies and mis-applied priorities have caused to get out of control.

The Present Situation

The curriculum in the schools is *varied/diverse* (demanding/challenging, firm, and set) and has varying levels of success in elementary and secondary schools. *Again, this depends on the perception and definition of what is considered success.* What is apparent, is that the competencies and expectations could be upgraded/enhanced.

The preparation for college-level work relies heavily on the educational philosophies and leadership by policy boards and educational officials, which can differ dramatically from district to district. For example: some teachers and educational leaders may feel strongly that there is *too much emphasis on college enrollment* and that the greater portion of students are not college material and should have other options like preparing to work, etc.

On the other hand, is the critical need to cultivate, generate, and assure much higher numbers of educational development and success for many more students. Therefore, the *differing opinions,* on the degree of need and the "*Workforce 2000*" message and the original "*A Nation At Risk*" (document by the National Education Association) has been instrumental in setting back dramatic changes in structure and resources in the educational systems which are in operation today.

Psychological Assessment

The overall psychological assessment and "*placement testing*" of public school students is implemented and administered with the intent to help the classroom teacher teach the students and to identify "*special need students*." At this point, resources can/should be allocated to alleviate educational obstacles. What is apparent, is that the assessment is administered and implemented without culturally-based community variables and does tend to classify socially and culturally isolated children as being in the need of educational support resources also known as special programs. The assessment and placement needs extensive study, systemic re-structuring, and administration that considers the characteristics of the community in which the school system delivers education. *There are countless stories/experiences of mis-applied assessment and placement.*

Very little is said about the detrimental and devastating effects on too many young children who are classified to be disabled in their learning who are devastated in their self-esteem and have very little hope for the future.

Assessment, registration, and enrollment of elementary and high school students is based on these *instruments of learning/assessment* and has resulted in a population that is numerically significant, probably very capable of learning and maybe even gifted. However, the systems in their structure and implementation can be labeled/classified as being not only ineffective, but possibly an ***outright failure*** in its ability to assess students properly and educate the economically disadvantaged community.

People, including teachers and educational officials talk about alternative means of instruction, cooperative learning, hands-on visualize media, etc. *In some cases these methods are touted as the new panacea for education!* ***However, it is the ability to cultivate/kindle the human spirit and generate high motivation which is the key to success in the classroom.*** *Many, too many, or possibly the greater portion of educators may not be willing to be the primary catalyst for learning and educational success in their classrooms or their schools.*

The sentiments of teachers is that they have an overwhelming task and many, possibly insurmountable obstacles to achieve success in education. *Therefore, they have the sentiment that they will do the best that they can with all the constraints which they have.* Very few have the time or persistence to look at their system as a whole and devise ways to change the system or make it more effective, much less develop an overall mission with high ideals and a structure that assures educational excellence for everyone.

Therefore, it becomes apparent that *leadership and vision* is really lacking in our systems, and consequently, our marginal success/progresses can considered an embarrassment in the eyes of the international community when one considers the economic resources available for education.

"All students can learn" should not just be a philosophical statement in educational literature, it should be the practice and basis for massive and long-lasting mobilization by our community for much higher levels of educational success which the community is capable of.

The sense within the community in one of general acceptance and complacency. The community needs to understand the essence of the educational product (the students) and the results which are coming out. The community should not be satisfied with the apparent *meager numbers* that are college-qualified and pursuing higher education. The community needs to communicate how concerned it is and demand greater accountability from its systems. In addition, the community needs to be active in policy, structural change, student development and achievement, and adequate facilities/resources. *The community awareness needs to be elevated/enhanced.* The harsh realities need to be understood, so that new directions can be taken and student achievement may be enhanced dramatically/drastically in order to assure the preparation of today's students for tomorrow's opportunities and challenges which require high-level academic skills.

The policy board and sense of leadership varies from district to district. An overall self-assessment by policy-makers would reveal that they are generally satisfied with their performance and leadership. An educator's perspective on the policy leadership would vary depending on the educator's priorities, personal sentiments, and sense of mission.

In general, there does appear to exist a sense to maintain the present status (*status quo*) and proceed on that basis. Therefore, that sense to maintain (keeping things as they are), precludes any urgency to re-structure, re-allocate priorities and resources, and initiate strategic planning includes many more students in the *academic mainstream* and achieving success.

Therefore, it appears that the administrative sentiments are that the educational needs of educational and economically disadvantaged and ethnic minority students will have to be set aside in favor of those students *"who are really serious about their education."* It is concluded by the policy leaders that academic achievers are going to be numerically smaller in those school systems where there are higher concentrations of ethnic minorities who are also educationally and economically disadvantaged. An example of this dilemma was brought out by a counselor who previously worked in a high school who automatically prepared and sent sixty to seventy percent of their seniors on to colleges and universities. The school had a pre-dominant curriculum of pre-college courses and teachers, a high profile emphasis for college, and counselors who were well versed in college opportunities and ***very pro-active/pro-college*** (initiated contact with college intentions) with the students.

The same counselor is now in a culturally diverse school with very significant concentrations of minorities. The sentiment is that they (school) have a different kind of student clientele and can't/should not be expected to provide the same proportion of college-ready students and actual college enrollment as the previous school. This kind of sentiment can and does create lower expectations, movement away from the academic mainstream and much lesser numbers of high student achievement and college ready enrollees.

Therefore, the policy boards needs to set policies that stress the need to be college prepared and have high academic skills. In addition, the priorities and resources should reflect this type of policy direction that is *much more inclusive* of the entire student population and the ethnic proportion, including those students which could be classified as economically and educationally disadvantaged by whatever definition is utilized to profile student populations. There does appear to be too much of an emphasis in *"other than higher education"* options for students, which could be construed as a resignation that many or a greater majority are academically capable and should explore other non-academic options. This is a more common sentiment policy direction, and could be challenged and changed to coincide closer with the "*Workforce 2000*" message for a ***sound academic base for all students.***

Additional factors that cause constraints for change can include an analysis of how many and what type of academic classes are offered. What such analysis could reveal, is that there is either a great many course options, various and limited course options, or very few course options that set the academic stage for college enrollment.

Teacher qualifications and specialization's does vary from school to school and by community. Sometimes it becomes evident that some districts have limited faculty resources and a non-competitive salary schedule, thereby affecting the recruitment and sustainment of faculty which are incapable of setting the "*academic climate*". In additional, critical areas for faculty teaching are and can be ignored. Generally, teachers are asked to teach in subject areas that are not their academic specialization and may/could affect the delivery of the curriculum to the students.

Teacher sentiments about student abilities and capabilities of minority students also varies within a school, within a school district, and from district to district. Teachers do come to visible realizations or conclusions that students can or can't learn the competencies of a challenging curriculum. As a result, students receiving these ***daily mixed messages*** can be confronted with both positive and negative reinforcement on the same-day/ever-day: and this could be instrumental in causing uncertainties about abilities, self-esteem, and what the expectations are. ***Consistency*** and continuity are important factors in teaching and implementing a curriculum. Therefore, the teachers need to recognize/realize how important their personal sentiments about student abilities are as it relates to student achievement or lack of it.

The current philosophies and priorities of school administrators does reflect the policy board philosophy and intent. Therefore, high school campus administrators can go about implementing their role with a satisfaction that is in keeping with the district philosophy and the board policy. Again, the priorities are set at the board level and communicated and implemented within the various schools in the jurisdiction of the district. There may be every right to feel totally satisfied with the educational results/products, and the student achievement levels based on present policy board sentiments.

There may exist an environment that warrants added attention to students results and overall achievement and/or sustainment. Administrators can/should acknowledge obstacles to learning within their school and recommend pro-active action plans that are more inclusive of much more of the student population and that contribute to positive student growth and development and a highly visible educational excellence environment.

Policy Boards for the various school districts do not appear to be in a *change* mode, which means that there is the appearance of *"a general satisfaction"* as to the implementation of education within the school systems. Therefore, this feeling of satisfactory policy implementation, board priorities and subsequent resource allocation indicates that the policy boards do not see any *major problem* in their school districts which require their immediate attention and resources. Therefore, the overall picture of *student test scores, student progress and achievement, curriculum content, academic courses and college preparation*, and actual college enrollment and success, which can be considered as indicators of public school student achievement indicates that there is something seriously wrong in how education is delivered to the community.

Minority dropout rates are at an all time high, academic challenges and achievement is minimal/negligible and college-ready minority numbers have declined and are not proportionally increasing as is the population! Again, someone has the responsibility for the educational decline at a time when broader-based educational development and advancement is critical to our society and community.

State legislative leadership recently changed, with many new faces, but not necessarily a foundation for different approaches to education or dramatic funding possibilities. However, new legislative efforts for charter schools (new concept schools for pilot educational programs), a new and added push for "subsidy" for students to attend private schools and receive a state supported taxpayer subsidy to attend. *What is apparent, is that there is nothing very dramatic on the educational horizon.* Local school systems will be left alone to function as they always have.

The State of Arizona was recently cited in the courts and mandated to develop more equitable methods of funding education. The intent is to alleviate a wide disparity between schools. Additionally, added State assessment testing has been provided for more student assessment information as to how Arizona students are doing and progressing. Again, this added testing does serve as a barometer, but cannot yet be considered as providing an accurate "*snapshot*" of success and/or a need for more progress.

Strategic planning initiatives at the state, county, and local levels do not include major planning efforts to enhance education as we now know it. Again, there does exist a general sense of satisfaction with existing systems. Community groups and organizations and some educational parent councils (bilingual, migrant, etc.) with major structural plans, but not necessarily having access to all the funding/resources to implement far-reaching initiatives.

Action Needed for the Conference to Focus on the Intent/Objective

The legislature needs to have a high profile campaign to enhance education, allow for resources, and utilize its power of persuasion and leadership to set the stage for dramatic shifts in perception and priorities. The state "*climate/atmosphere*" has to be in-place and have overall acceptance in the community.

Policy board re-alignment of priorities began with a realization that action and resources are needed to "*do a much better job*" of delivering education to the community. *This could include local initiatives in curriculum, faculty development, facilities, greater access to academic programs, and, most important, visible and very significant increases in student achievement.*

Accountability could center around grades, test scores, college preparation and enrollment, including post-secondary efforts, equitable distribution of students within the academic programs, much lower levels of attrition and related factors, much higher levels of parental involvement, and the ability for products (students) of the system to have its students be competitive in college and the working world.

Student recognition, action and mobilization for higher educational challenges is crucial if the conference objective for *many more* minority college graduates is perceived as plausible.

Students are asked to make decisions on their educational goals at the age of thirteen and fourteen. They make these decisions based on what they know and understand *at the time* (their frame of reference). Therefore, their high school coursework often can reflect the minimum requirements to graduate from high school and not necessarily to prepare to be accepted for admission at four-year colleges and universities.

Statewide studies reveal that the greater majority of high minorities (upwards of 65 percent (65%) are not eligible to be accepted for admissions at a state university due to the classes they did not take or the curriculum they are enrolled in. This number/proportion has not changed over the past five to six years in spite of highly publicized Board of regents proposed enrollment changes. Again this indicates that there is no visible major push/mobilization to assure that many more minorities are taking that minimum pre-college curriculum and achieving at a higher level in order to assure themselves of acceptance in four-year colleges and universities.

Students today do not realize the implications of their decisions not to accept high school educational challenges. They also are not aware of the skill, abilities, and level of education necessary to survive in today's society. They must know/be aware of the extreme importance for higher education as it relates to appropriate career options and earnings potential. The students must come to the conclusion that higher education *preparation* and *enrollment is absolutely necessary* and initiate efforts with their education with this realization.

Parental involvement at all levels of public education needs to be inclusive of many more parents with much more involvement throughout the educational system. In addition, there must exist a very supportive atmosphere within the home that fosters/supports the educational development of the student for each and every grade level. *High school parental involvement needs to be intensified to assure that the desired educational outcomes are realized.*

Parents need to be aware of the importance of pre-college preparation and the extreme importance of higher education for stable/promising employment for the present and the future. Economic implications must be clearly understood to generate those *much higher levels of motivation* for education.

The Present-Day Realities That Demand a Massive Re-structuring and Mobilization

The demographic realities and dramatic population shifts indicate a future community and society that is vastly different than the present. Within this sociological phenomena, is the need to have *built-in* assurances that *everyone* not only has access to higher education, but that *systems* are in place to *assure that college enrollments increase across the board for all the community.*

The Political climate- an appearance of right-wing shifts vs. Political apathy and voter disenchantment with the present system is more than apparent. The problem is not associated/affiliated with either political party and sentiment about the problem/need does not run along party lines. It is everybody's problem if a growing segment of the population is not growing in productivity, capability, and education. *Equity issues are also economic issues.* A close scrutiny indicates that we cannot afford to visualize a lack of equity as *common* nature or as an acceptable part of our society. We must see it for what it really is, which will be a drain on our society *if educational attainment does not increase.*

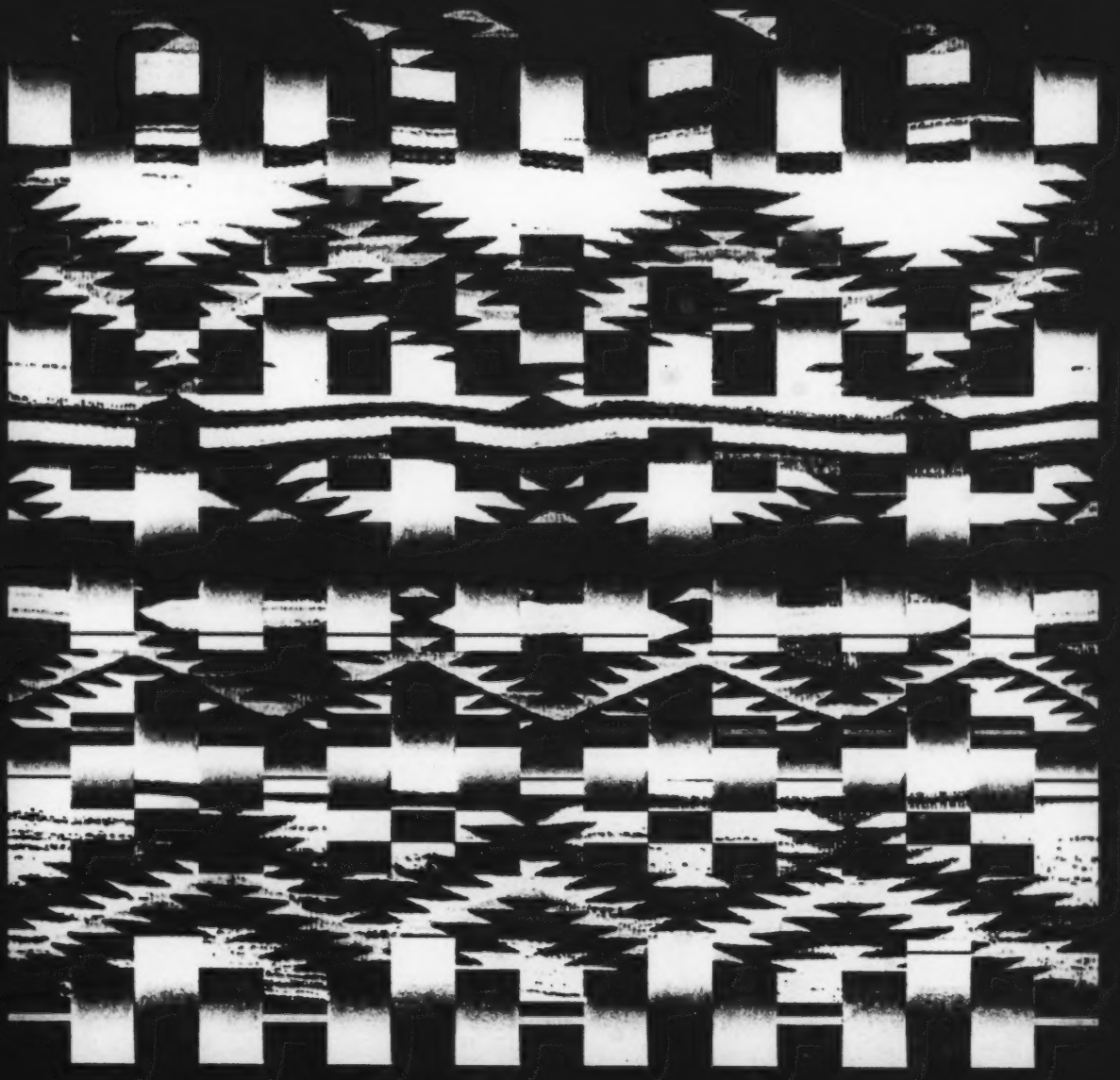
Therefore, there are "*rumblings*" in higher education, and a realization of the need to educate the *total community* and the various segments of the community. Again, this present-day reality must be recognized as a prominent issue and a priority for strategic planning initiatives. It is evident that there are some increased efforts and priorities, but a massive, board-based push for educational excellence.

The real community atmosphere has been one of the *traditional acceptance* of present college-going rates of ethnic minorities. Again, this can be partially attributed to a lack of awareness of the economic impact or lack of it, all related to educational levels and equal/accessible participation in all segments of the working community.

This Conference, the organizers, and the participants all have a responsibility to make this a high profile issue and help to initiate increased efforts across-the-community to remedy/alleviate unacceptable college-going rates of ethnic minorities. In some instances, a crisis can/should be declared to magnify this crucial community dilemma.

The global economy which affects our country is very intense, with some countries now having the capability to move ahead of our country in productivity, goods and services. Many of us know that we have lost some of the luster in our economy and standing in the international community; although we remain as the single most productive and advanced country on earth. Many developing countries model their development based on principles and priorities of our systems of government and economy, which includes ***education.***

Expanding Minority Opportunities



First Annual National Conference
Conference Program

Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona

January 19-21, 1995

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Sponsored by The Aetna Foundation, The American Council on Education, Arizona State University, The Coalition to Increase Minority Degrees, The College Board, The Charles A. Dana Foundation, The Educational Testing Service Southwest Field Office, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The General Electric Fund, and The Rockefeller Foundation

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Multicultural Affairs
Glendale Community College
"Efforts Needed to Help Assure Much More Minority College Enrollment and Success"

Gavin A. Samms
Managing Partner
Office of Minority
Educational Development
Georgia Tech
"Improving the Success of Traditionally Underrepresented Students at Georgia Tech"

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Minorities: ASPIRE to Teach

Zenobia L. Hikes
Associate Director
Admissions
University of Delaware

Gail S. Rys
Director
ASPIRE Program
University of Delaware

James M. Shaw
Coordinator
ASPIRE Program
University of Delaware

Barbara G. VanDornick
Director
Student Services
University of Delaware

55 – Turquoise Room
No More Applause for Predicting Rain, Only for Building Arks

Dallas B. Chapman
Assistant Vice President
Western Region
American College Testing

Bob Maez
Superintendent
Educational Services
El Monte Union High
School District

Nancy Ringewalk-Caine
Counselor
Mt. Carmel High School

Ernest Valdez
Educational Associate
West Region
American College Testing

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Roy Thomas Dawson
Corporate Manager
Human Resources
Sunstrand Corporation
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Teresa N. McBride
President/CEO
The McBride Foundation
"College Bound"

Henry Teoh
Distinguished Service Professor
of Physics
State University of New York,
College at Old Westbury
"Developing Internships Opportunities"

CIMD

Coalition to Increase Minority Degrees

Precollege

Undergraduate

Graduate Level

Career

January 1995

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Colleagues:

Welcome to the First Conference on *Expanding Minority Opportunities*. We hope and anticipate that this will become an annual event. Given the great number of exciting and often visionary presentations, the support and participation by foundations, corporations, and educational associations, we are certainly encouraged about the prospects of this conference and convinced of the need for a national forum that focuses on the mobilization of programs, resources, ideas, models, and technologies that will expand minority opportunities.

We are very proud that this first conference is so robust in its representation! Please share your ideas and constructive suggestions with us so that together we can make this event fulfill its promise as the auspices where people from every part of the nation working on solutions to a common cause can come together and showcase their programs or accomplishments and share their ideas.

This conference has been conceived and organized by the Coalition to Increase Minority Degrees (CIMD) which includes the following components: Project PRIME, the Southern Rocky Mountain Alliance for Minority Participation, Project 1000, The Hispanic Experts Database/Minority Experts Database, Bilingual Review/Press. Finally, I take this opportunity to announce the most recent component of the CIMD: the Minority Advanced Technology Initiative. MATI will positively apply the capabilities of advanced technology and science to address vital instructional and other academic needs of minorities, as well as other important issues and concerns of minority populations, such as the recruitment of minorities into both university studies and the general world of work, and the database management, information processing, and networking needs of minority individuals, communities, and organizations.

And welcome to Arizona during our celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. week!

Gary D. Keller
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